

immense amount of damage especially among the cherry-orchards in the summer. He concludes that steps should be taken in certain districts at any rate to reduce their numbers. Fruit-growers in other parts of the world, even in South Africa, where the Starling has been introduced and has spread very quickly, have had the same experience.

List of other Ornithological Publications received.

- CHERRIE, G. K. Some apparently undescribed Birds from the Collection of the Roosevelt South American Expedition. Bull. Am. Mus. N. H. xxxv. art. 17, 1916.
- GURNEY, J. H. Ornithological Report for Norfolk (1915). Zoologist, 1916.
- SHUFELDT, R. W. Some Cardinal and Owl Notes. ("Guide to Nature," ix. Sound Beach, Conn., 1916.)
- WHITE, S. A. In the Far North-West. (Adelaide, 1916.)
- The Auk. (Vol. xxxiii. Nos. 1-3. Cambridge, Mass., 1916.)
- Avicultural Magazine. (Third Series, Vol. vii. Nos. 9-11. London, 1916.)
- Bird Notes. (New Series, Vol. vii. Nos. 7-9. Ashbourne, 1916.)
- British Birds. (Vol. x. Nos. 2-4. London, 1916.)
- Canada, Geol. Survey. Summary Report for 1915. (Ottawa, 1916.)
- The Condor. (Vol. xviii. Nos. 3, 4. Hollywood, Cal., 1916.)
- The Irish Naturalist. (Vol. xxv. Nos. 6-9. Dublin, 1916.)
- Revue Française d'Ornithologie. (Nos. 88, 89. Orléans, 1916.)
- The Scottish Naturalist. (Nos. 55-57. Edinburgh, 1916.)
- South Australian Ornithologist. (Vol. ii. pt. 7. Adelaide, 1916.)

XXXIV.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

Food of the Peregrine.

SIR,—Field-naturalists must have read with amazement Capt. Collingwood Ingram's statement ('Ibis,' p. 523) that Rooks are probably quite immune from the attacks of the Peregrine in a wild state. I live within easy reach of fifteen eyries, and find when visiting the "plucking places" that Rooks largely compose the bill-of-fare.

My friend, the late Mr. Ussher, examined more Peregrines' breeding-places than any man in the British Isles, and the following is taken from his book, 'The Birds of Ireland,' p. 140:—"Rooks are by far the most usual quarry in Co. Waterford . . ."

Rocklow, Fethard,
Co. Tipperary.
21 July, 1916.

Yours truly,
C. J. CARROLL.

Australian Subspecies.

DEAR SIR,—I was glad to see Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant's notes in reply to Mr. Gregory M. Mathews in the April issue of 'The Ibis' in which he says "Such a system of name-juggling and species-splitting as he adopts can only result in hopeless chaos."

We in Australia have protested personally to him against the indefinite multiplication of subspecies. I have worked at Australian Ornithology for over thirty years, and, in common with many of my co-workers in the field, am convinced that a large proportion of Mr. Mathews's subspecies are barely varieties. I myself have on several occasions described as subspecies forms that I should much prefer to note as slight variants from type, but not deserving of subspecific rank.

For instance, in the genus *Rhipidura* the species named by Latham "*rufifrons*" exhibits a gradual transition from the form occurring in Victoria with almost three-quarters of the tail orange-rufous to the form from Queensland described by Mr. North as "*intermedia*" "with less orange-rufous on basal half of tail-feathers." In the form from Anson Bay, Northern Territory, described by myself in 'The Emu,' July 1911, under the name of *Rhipidura mayi*, the characteristic orange-rufous coloration of the basal half of the tail-feathers is absent, except for a touch of rufous on the outer web. From a locality still further round the coast to the west, Gould described in his 'Birds

of New Guinea' yet another Australian form under the name of *R. dryas*, in which the tail-feathers are the same as in *R. mayi*, but the "spangled marks on the breast are absent." I have never seen a specimen of *R. dryas*, but Gould's description, as well as his figure in the work before quoted, conclusively show that the "spangled marks" are absent in *R. dryas*, whereas they are present in the other forms.

In my description of *R. mayi* in 'The Emu' of July 1911, I suggested that these were all one species and that as one travelled up the Australian coast to the north, and then after passing Cape York to the west a gradual transition took place, of which *Rhipidura fulvifrons* Lath. (*Howeavis rufifrons kemp* Mathews) is one extreme and the *Rhipidura dryas* Gould is the other.

Personally I think that this being the case *R. fulvifrons* should stand for the whole series, and the interesting steps in the gradual transition noted as varieties without bearing any change in the scientific name.

To illustrate a case where the trinomial system may be justified, I would cite that of "*Pardalotus affinis* Gould" from Tasmania, which is identical with the mainland form except that the tips of the primary-coverts are yellow instead of red and it is a little larger bird. I have not met with any intermediate forms, the replacement of the red by yellow in the insular variety being constant. Surely well-marked races, and not slight gradations in general shade of colouring, warrant subspecific rank?

I enclose a formalin specimen of *Rhipidura mayi* Ashby, of which you can make what use you like. If not wanted, please give it to the British Museum.

Yours sincerely,

EDWIN ASHBY, M.B.O.U.

"Wittunga,"

Blackwood, South Australia.

28 June, 1916.

Errata to the first part of Mr. Swynnerton's paper "On the Coloration of the Mouths and Eggs of Birds" (pp. 264-294).—Mr. Swynnerton writes: "I take this opportunity to correct a few somewhat important errors, due mainly to my illegible writing, that appeared in the first part of my paper (April, 1916, pp. 264-294). The omission of a passage accounts for one or two minor discrepancies, also for the mistake over *Phrynocephalus mystaceus*, one of several lizards that display bright mouth-colours when at bay, after the manner of an adult bird.

- Page 266, line 28. For "the lizard *Phrynocephalus mystaceus*" read simply "lizards."
- " 271, ,, 14. ,, "alone. It is in virtue of this that" read "alone, in virtue of which."
- " 273, ,, 17. ,, "common groups" read "colour-groups."
- " 273, ,, 18. ,, "memory and simplification" read "memory-simplification."
- " 274, ,, 17. ,, "direction" read "directive."
- " 277, lines 25-35. All in inverted commas (B. O. C. Bull. xxxv. p. 108).
- " 280, ,, 3-4. For "mouths" read "these mouths." For "often" read "in any case often."
- " 281, line 38 (last). Omit "or."
- " 282, lines 15-16. Omit "thus" and for "for" read "by the fact that."
- " 285, line 32. For "less strongly, as did" read "as did, less strongly."
- " 292, ,, 16. ,, "contingent" read "counteragent."
- " 294. Fig. 34 is *Laniarius manningi*. Fig. 41 is *Trochocercus bivittatus* Rehw.*

Three points in the Plate (p. 264, pl. vii.) may be mentioned. The twin spots in *Chloropeta* (fig. 9) do not, I think, in life slope in to the extent shown here (and quite likely in my own sketch); the dusky area of the tongue of *Pycnonotus* (fig. 15) is not seen at all during the action of 'wagging' that accompanies a demand for food, and

* The species described by myself as *T. megalolophus* (Bull. B. O. C. xix. p. 109, figured 'Ibis,' 1908, p. 96) proves actually to be this species of Dr. Reichenow's.

the tongue of nestling *Dryoscopus guttatus* (fig. 25, *a*) should be shown perfectly plain. The twin spots only *commence* to show after the young have left the nest, and it is some weeks more before they attain even the strength shown in fig. 25, *b*. Having mentioned fig. 15, I may add that, in view of a recent observation, the possibility of mimicry between mouths of *Pycnonotus* and *Hyphantornis*, guardedly hinted at in pp. 284-5, probably need not be considered at all.

I would like to compliment Mr. Grönvold on his success with a plate of a kind he has probably not undertaken before and which he had to execute under the difficult condition of shrunken spirit-specimens, with notes and rough sketches by a person too far away to be readily consulted."

Two new names given to British Birds.—The July number of 'The Auk' (p. 346) has a note that, in a recent number of 'Falco,' the organ of the eccentric Otto Kleinschmidt, there are descriptions of the British races of *Passer domesticus* and *Strix alba* under the new names *Passer hostilis* and *Strix hostilis*. The author, O. Kleinschmidt, states that his subspecies will probably have a hostile reception in their native country, and explains that he does not name them in the interests of British Ornithology but in accordance with the thoroughness of German science!

List of M.B.O.U. serving with H.M. Forces.—The names of two additional Members of the Union must be added to those already published in October last year and in January and April this year:—

Farquhar, J. H. J. Licut. Nigeria Regiment. In Nigeria and Cameroon.

Finch-Davies, C. G. (formerly Davies). Licut. 3rd South African Mounted Riflemen. Served through the recent rebellion in the Free State and the campaign in German South-West Africa.

The following is a summary of the lists to date :—

Serving in the Navy	9
„ France	14
„ Egypt and Gallipoli.....	7
„ India and Mesopotamia	7*
„ Africa (East, South, and West).	6
„ the British Islands	37
Killed in action or died from illness	8
Prisoner in Germany	1
	<hr/>
	89
	<hr/>

The new General Index to 'The Ibis.'—The Index of all the generic, specific and subspecific names mentioned in the eighteen volumes of 'The Ibis' from 1895 to 1912, consisting of 513 pages, is now ready.

The compilation of this volume has entailed far more work and greater expense than was anticipated, but in spite of this and the increased cost of labour and materials due to the war, it has been decided to issue the Index at the special subscription price previously announced, viz., £1 1s. 6d. (including postage), and it is hoped every member will avail himself of this opportunity to secure the volume.

This special rate will apply only to those members who have already ordered copies and to those who fill up and return the order form recently circulated.

The volume is published at £1 12s. 6d. to the public.

* Col. Harington's name, included under this head in the former list is now added to those "killed in action."